TALKS TO FARMERS

BY OSCAR AMERINGER.

Little Bugs and Big Bugs

Brother farmer, you and I are about the most important persons in the world. If it wasn't for you, mankind would starve, and without my wage labor it would go naked and homeless. We two are the foundation of society. The whole structure rests on our shoulders. This being the case, one should think that the world would treat us with the respect due to our importance. But, alas, the people we feed and clothe look down upon us. You—the hand that feeds—are called a rube and a hayseed. And when I appear as a mass, the newspapers term it a mob.

And Again

Brother, did it ever occur to you that there is something wrong in a world where the most useful people are regarded as "the lower class"? Did it ever strike you as strange that the most useless folks call themselves the "best people?"

Now, if you had a cow that would not give milk, or a hen that would not lay eggs, you would get rid of the "critter" in no time. You don't prefer potato bugs to potatoes—or weeds to wheat. You wouldn't build a nest for the hawk that eats your chickens or dig a hole for a badger. Not much. Out on the farm you are the deadly enemy of every bug, insect, bird, beast or weed that eats your crops. You don't say these things belong to the better class, just because they manage to live without paying board.

Parasites?

Yes, you recognize parasites quick enough on the farm. Nowadays you hunt them even with microscopes. But when the parasite is as big as you, walks on two legs, lives in a mansion or throws dirt and dust in your eyes as he roars past you in a touring car, then you don't know him. You even may feel honored if he happens to speak to you, which does not happen very often.

Bugs and Bugs

No, brother farmer, it is not so much the little Bugs as the big Bugs that are hurting you. There are too "darned" many people who live without work—too many "lillies of the field" who "sow not" but who are "Johnny on the spot" at harvest time. They do all the work through substitutes and by proxy, but when it comes to eating, they sit at the head of the table and devour the choice morsels. The leavings and crumbs are left for us. We two, like cat and dog, lick the plates after the banquet.

When I go out in the country, I see plenty of nice fat steers and hogs, but I don't see many nice fat farmers. Looks like the live stock is all used to fatten the other fellow. And right here in the city, I never see farmers hanging around the swell restaurants or picking their teeth in the lobby of the swell hotels. Farmers who come to town usually hang out at the cheapest hash joint they can find.

Whose Business Is It?

"Well," you say, "what business is it of yours, what I do or how I am done? Neither do you look as if you suffered from an over-dose of prosperity."

That is just it. We are both being done. There was a time when we did each other in a kind of friendly way. That is a long time ago. I was making shoes then in a little country town in my own shop. You used to bring me a cowhide to make boots for you and you paid me for my work with potatoes and eggs. Well, that cowhide was almost too good to be all used up in boots, so I substituted a little horsehide here and there, where it could not be seen anyhow. And when you paid the bill, the smallest potatoes were mostly at the bottom of the basket and the eggs sometimes tasted as if the hen had tried to hatch them and got discouraged.

As I said, we did each other in a kind of friendly, neighborly way, but that was nothing to the way we both are done by the other fellow. I am still making shoes, but not on my own hook. I am one of the three thousand employes of the Doembrown Boot and Shoe Company. The way we turn out shoes in this plant would make your head swim. Most of the work that cannot be done by machine is done by women and children. We are not paid by the pair but by the gross. They have to do this, because a cent can't be divided. That cowhide of yours is now split three times and worked up in polo boots for the chosen few. What you get in your shoes nowadays is horse leather, paper and wood. But while the material has gone down some, the price has held its own nicely. The price that you pay, understand, not the price that I get. That is too small to mention. However, I am no longer kicking about small potatoes. Any kind of potatoes are good enough for me. And as far as eggs are concerned, no hen can blame me any longer for destroying her hope of posterity.

The Skin Game

The way this system is skinning us two is something like this. Since you can't bring the farm products direct to me, you take them to the market. This market is like a barrel. Into it you pour potatoes, eggs, chickens, pork, beef, wheat, corn, fruit, milk and butter. For every barrelful the man in charge of it gives you a dollar. You would like to have more. But that doesn't do you any good. You either sell the barrel to the fellow at his price, or you sell not at all. Kicking does not help, because he has got you where the hair is short. You have got to sell because you need the cash to pay taxes and interest. You must have cash to buy farm implements, clothing and furniture. Your grandpa made these things mostly himself and grandma helped him. But making everything needed around the place is a lost art. Your wife cannot make candles and weave and spin. You are a bum blacksmith and a worse wagon maker. So it takes money. You must sell the stuff you produce to buy the stuff you need.

From the barrel runs a hose to the city. On the end of this hose you see me with a bushel basket. I am there to buy the fuel to raise the steam to make snoes. The man in charge of the nozzle fills my basket, and I plunk down a dollar. Now, this thing of buying a bushel basket full of farm produce for one dollar is only an illustration. It does not happen in actual life.

However, let us say I paid for one bushel, as much as you received for the barrel. At the barrel end you are howling about low prices and at the nozzle end I am howling about the high cost of living.

If I was just an ordinary woodenhead, I would blame the tariff or the gold standard, or the Almighty. But I'm not. I'm a... never mind what I am.

Possibly you are not interested in how I am skinned when I buy your products in the city. But I tell you, brother farmer, that high cost of living

comes home to roost. You will find it on top of those paper-soled, wooden-heeled, horsehide shoes I make. When you buy them you also pay for the high cost of living in the city. That package they are handing you in the store contains just about one dollar's worth of shoes and six dollar's worth of profit, interest, rent and "high cost of living." The one dollar goes to me and my k'nd. The six dollars help to support the better class, that is, the people who are too good to work, but who work us both.

The Means of Escape

Now, there is but one way by which we two can escape this eternal skinning. We have got to work for each other again. The big bugs who stand between us must be eliminated. The barrel and the hose, that is, the railroads, warehouses, market facilities and factories, must become the property of the people who use them. And since these things can only be used in common, they must be owned in common. Now, the one institution that represents, or at least ought to represent, all of the people is the government.

We want government ownership and democratic control, of the railroads, warehouses, market facilities, factories, mines, telegraph, telephones, etc., so they will become the property of the people. As these things can only be used in common, they must be owned in common, as the highways, schools and postoffices are used for the common good.

Uncle Sam will carry a letter all the way to San Francisco for two cents. He neither profiteers or robs you. You know you would rather have Uncle Sam do the coal business, and haul by rail your products to market than to have it done by the bunch that squeeze millions of dollars out of us.

This is the only method by which you and I ever can escape from being skinned. And the only political party in the world that stands for this program is the Socialist party.

Organize—Vote Right

Join the **Socialist Party,** and if there is no local of the party in your community, lend **your assistance to organize one.**

Those who produce the wealth of the Nation can control the Nation by and through organization, and the intelligent use of the Ballot.

Government Facts

The farmer receives only twenty-two cents for the products produced on his farm, for which the consumer in the city pays one dollar.

The speculator skins us both.

There are 479,000 fewer persons on the farms of America in 1926 than there were in 1925, says the Department of Agriculture.

"Caused by long hours of labor, and too small returns for the labor expended."

Those who produced nothing, continue to enjoy the fruits of the labor of the farmer, and his family.

The Encyclopedia Britannica says: "The ethics of Socialism are identical with the ethics of Christianity."

Prof. R. P. Ely, of the University of Wisconsin, said: "Socialism is simply applied Christianity.

Frances E. Willard said: "Socialism is practical Christianity. It is God's way out of the wilderness."

"Commissions! Commissions!"

Wisconsin is a state controlled by Commissions.

A state commission is now interfering with municipally owned utilities, and regulataing rates for the benefit of the privately owned corporations, and is also hampering the co-operatively owned enterprises, controlled by the farmers of Wisconsin. "Wake up, before it is too late." Organize and vote the Socialist Party Ticket.

BY HECK! I AM READY FOR A FULL DAY'S WORK

BY CARRIE EDDIE SHEFFLER.

Down on the farm about half past four,
I slip on my pants an' sneak out the door—
Out to the yard I run like the dickens
To milk 10 cows an' feed the chickens;
Clean out the barn, curry Nance and Jiggs,
Separate the cream an' slop all the pigs;
An', by heck, I'm ready for a full day's work.

Then I grease the wagon an' put on the rack,
Throw a jug of water in an old grain sack;
Hitch up the horses, hustle down the lane,
Must get the hay in for it looks like rain.
Look over yonder—sure as I am born—
Cattle on the rampage an' cows in the corn;
Start across the medder, run a mile or two,
Heaving like I'm wind broke, get wet clean through.
Get back to the horses, then, for recompense,
Nance gets straddle of the barbed wire fence—
Joints all a' aching an' muscles in a jerk,
I'm fit as a fiddle for a full day's work.

Work all summer till winter is nigh,
Then figure up the books an' heave a big sigh:
Worked all year, didn't make a thing,
Got less cash now than I had last spring.
Now some people say there ain't no hell—
But they never farmed so they can't tell.
When spring rolls 'round I take another chance,
While the fringe grows longer on my old pants;
Give my s'pender a hitch, my belt another jerk,
An' then by heck! I'm ready for a full year's work.

It is of interest that the above verses were sent to the national office of the Socialist party by Comrade Carrie Eddie Sheffler, whose father was one of the jurymen who, in the Pullman strike of 1894, indicted Eugene V. Debs for conspiracy and treason.

Additional copies of this leaflet can be secured for 50 cents per hundred, $4.00 per thousand, Socialist Party of Wisconsin, 528 Chestnut Street, Milwaukee, Wis.

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